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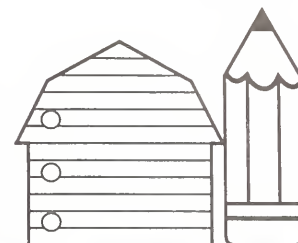


# Ag in the Classroom

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# Notes

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom Program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact the AITC Director, Room 317-A, Administration Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-0991. 202/720-5727

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## Getting Ag's Act Together and Taking It On the Road

Imagine a watermelon seed-spitting contest . . . for 20,000 children. That is just one of the exhibits that enchanted, entertained, and educated students throughout Florida as part of Florida's Ag Road Show.

Sponsored by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences, the Road Show has brought agriculture to life for more than 20,000 Florida school children in a series of hands-on exhibits. The show has already toured to ten Florida cities—Orlando, Tampa, Fort Myers, West Palm Beach, Miami, Jacksonville, Pensacola, Panama City, Tallahassee, Lakeland—and there are still more stops planned.

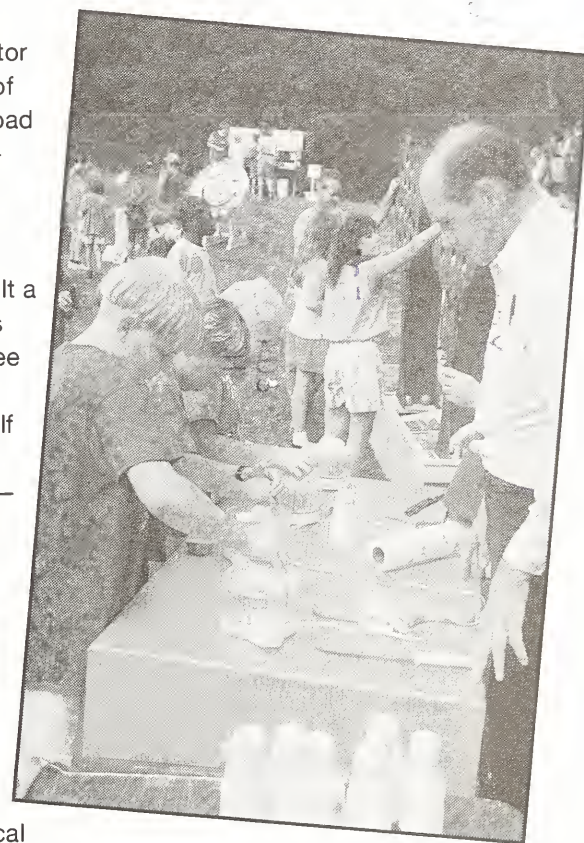
Each show contains about 20 exhibits that are miniaturizations of a Florida agricultural industry: for example, citrus, watermelons, cotton, dairy, horticulture, tropical fish, livestock, and phosphate. "But when these exhibits are all assembled

in one spot," says Dodie Wentzel, the AITC coordinator for Florida, which was one of the major sponsors, "the Road Show is anything but miniature—in fact, it takes nearly two acres to set up at each stop."

The seafood industry built a boat for the show. Students can get into the boat and see nautical maps of where people fish and how the Gulf of Mexico looks. They can also learn from videotapes—one showing different kinds of fishing and another of an "old salt" telling how he catches oysters.

Adjoining the boat is an aquarium containing many different varieties of tropical fish. Students learn that there are more tropical fish flown out of Tampa every day than anywhere else in the world, and more fish than people fly out of the Tampa airport!

At the cotton exhibit, students see two bales of cotton—one weighing 15 pounds and one weighing 500 pounds.



*Making butter was just one of the popular exhibits at Florida's Ag Road Show.*



*Continued on page 5*



## National Agriculture Day Celebrates the Environment

More forests and open land; cleaner water, soil and air; and more wildlife are the fruits of farmers' and ranchers' hard work. The many contributions American



agriculture has made to preserving and nurturing our environment will be celebrated during National Agriculture Week, March 19 through 25, and National Agriculture Day, March 20.

### GROWING BETTER EVERYDAY

**In Partnership with Nature**

*"Growing Better Everyday in Partnership with Nature" is the theme of the 1995 National Agriculture Day.*

The annual celebration of agriculture is designed to help the non-farm public learn more about agriculture. The Agriculture Council of America coordinates National Agriculture Day.

This year's theme is "Growing Better Everyday in Partnership with Nature." The theme was chosen to highlight the important contributions farmers and ranchers have made in protecting the

environment and conserving natural resources. Through information and events formulated around the theme, Agriculture Day can increase consumer awareness of environment-friendly agriculture practices and show agriculture from a different perspective.

A fact kit developed by the Ag Council demonstrates that American agriculture is protecting the environment by preserving natural resources and by sparking the development of consumer products from renewable resources. For example, 75 percent of the nation's wildlife live on farms and ranches. The trees that farmers and ranchers plant to protect their land provide shelter for birds, deer, antelope, ducks, and geese.

New use products are helping to reduce dependence on non-renewable resources. For example, biodegradable garbage bags and eating utensils are now made from starch. Soybeans can be found in cleansers. Milk not only feeds children, but is also used to make the tape for their disposable diapers.

*Continued on page 6*

### Agriculture and Nature Facts for National Ag Day

#### Preserving Our Natural Resources

- Contour farming—planting crops around hillsides instead of up and down—keeps soil from washing away. About 26 million acres in the United States are managed in this way.
- American farmers have planted over 170,000 miles of windbreaks and continue to plant thousands yearly. These rows of trees and hedges keep soil from blowing away.
- Farmers maintain over 1.3 million acres of grass waterways, allowing water to flow naturally from crops without eroding soil.
- "Precision farming," using satellite maps and computers to match seed, fertilizer and crop protector applications to local soil conditions, boosts crop yields and reduces waste.
- Seventy-two million acres are farmed by reduced tillage practices, and 26 million acres are farmed in narrow strips.
- Because of all these practices, erosion from rainfall fell from 4.1 tons per acre to 3.1 tons between 1982 and 1992, while wind erosion declined from 3.3 tons to 2.5 tons.

#### Providing for Wildlife

- Seventy-five percent of the nation's wildlife live on farms and ranches. Agricultural land

serves as a natural preserve, supplying animals with abundant food and habitat.

- Each year, nine million trees are reseeded on farmland—three billion planted by tree farmers and orchardists. The other six billion grow naturally.

#### Developing Consumer Products

- In 1987, only five newspapers used soy ink. Now more than 3,000 do.
- Road de-icers are being made from corn instead of salt. They reduce rust on bridges and cars, as well as salt pollution of our fresh water supply.
- Plastic derived from starches are fully biodegradable and is reducing the need for petroleum.
- Emerging agricultural crops like lesquerella (a desert shrub) can be found at today's cosmetic counter—in the form of lipstick.
- Low-grade wool, currently unusable, is being developed to clean up hazardous spills. Wool absorbs 10 to 30 times its weight in oil.
- A new stain remover is being developed from soybean and peanut oils, which quickly erases greasy stains and then biodegrades.



# Spotlight

## Ohio Teacher, Students Bake a Pie and See Ohio

When Ellen Wilson, a first grade teacher at Cassady Alternative School in Columbus, Ohio, was looking for a way to conclude a year spent incorporating agriculture into her curriculum, she discovered Marjorie Priceman's book *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World*. But instead of setting off on an imaginary world tour with her students, the class instead created their own book—*How to Make an Apple Pie and See Ohio*.

"First, we read the book and looked for all the places the main character visited," Wilson says. "But then I asked my students to think about what we'd learned during the year. Wasn't there someplace closer that we could get the ingredients to bake an apple pie?"

Working cooperatively, the students came up with their list. For eggs, they could visit the world's largest poultry farm in

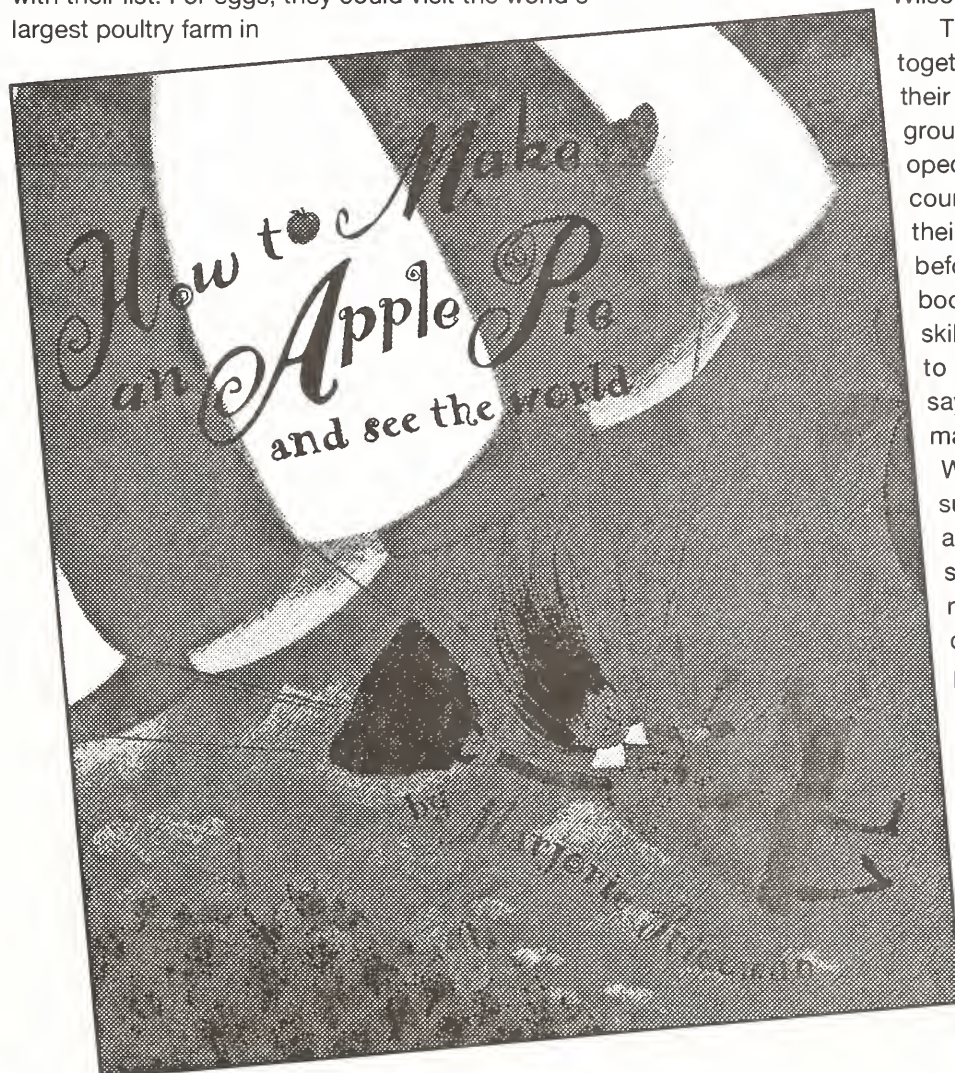
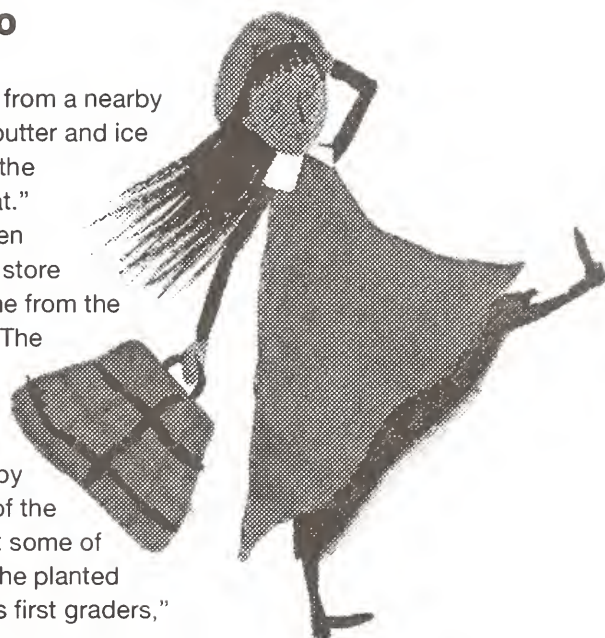
Larue, Ohio. The milk came from a nearby dairy farm. "We had made butter and ice cream during the year, and the children all remembered that."

For cinnamon, the children went to Kroger's, a grocery store based in Ohio. The salt came from the salt mines under Lake Erie. The sugar came from sugar beets that grow in Ohio. The apples came from orchards originally planted by Johnny Appleseed. "None of the original trees still exists, but some of the orchards remain where he planted them—a fact that fascinates first graders,"

Wilson says.

The class worked together to write the text of their own book. Then groups of children developed the illustrations. Of course, they had to test their recipe for apple pie before including it in the book. "That taught math skills as the children had to measure," Wilson says. "It was a delicious math lesson."

Wilson attended the summer AITC workshop at Ohio State and has since tried to incorporate agriculture into her curriculum wherever possible. A focus on agriculture has given Wilson's students exposure to many of the things they would otherwise only read about in school. "It's pretty hard to teach children 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' if they've never seen a sheep," she says.





## Farm Tours Plant Seeds of Awareness



*Students enjoy visiting a tree farm and learning about the economic importance of forestry.*

Hernando County, Florida, like the rest of the United States, is rapidly becoming urbanized. Between 1981 and 1991, the population experienced a 127 percent increase in population, making the county the second fastest-growing in the state of Florida.

A majority of the county's young people are now two or three generations away from any direct contact with agriculture. They have little understanding of the food and fiber system. For the past two years, local agriculture leaders have joined forces with the Extension Service to help students gain a greater awareness of agriculture. Fifth graders and their teachers were invited to visit several farms, representing the leading agricultural sectors in central Florida. The four-hour tours took students to three separate farms. They typically visited a cattle ranch, a dairy farm, and a planted stand of pines.



*A newborn calf was an especially popular sight*



## Teaching Kit Helps Kids Take Care of Business

The spirit of entrepreneurship is thriving among today's high school students. In a recent survey, seven out of ten said they wanted to start their own business. But in the same survey, 86 percent said their knowledge of business is very poor, or, at best, fair.

A new teaching package may give these future business owners the skills and information they need. Taking Care of Business is a multi-media educational package that introduces students to the ways Americans organize their communities—in businesses, in community service organizations, and in government. Developed by the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the package was designed to meet curriculum standards for social studies, economics, and related subject areas.

In a videotape and accompanying teacher materials, students learn about four types of businesses: sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, and cooperatives. Because agribusinesses represent each of the four types, teachers can incorporate lessons about agriculture into their discussions of the free enterprise system.

In the economics lessons, students learn about major categories of business activity—production of basic products, processing and manufacturing, distribution, and service. They also help a small

business compute the profits from a week's work—and then analyze some steps the business could take to become more profitable.

In the history lessons, students trace the impact that businesses have had on American society. In the early days of the nation, people's needs were supplied almost solely by goods that could be produced or made at home. The rise of business organizations has helped Americans to develop the highest standard of living in the world.

Single copies of Taking Care of Business are available for \$25 from NCFC, Education Department, 50 F Street NW, Suite 900, Washington DC 20001. Discounts are offered on bulk purchases. Call (202) 626-8700.



*Tomorrow's  
entrepreneurs can learn  
more about businesses  
today with a teaching  
kit developed by the  
National Council of  
Farmer  
Cooperatives*

## Getting Ag's Act Together

*Continued from page 1*

They polish their math facts by figuring out how many pairs of blue jeans could be made from a 500-pound bale if a 15-pound bale produced seven pairs. "If you are interested in trivia, we have

it. If you want the broad picture, we have that, too," says Larry Reese, Training Coordinator for the Division of Marketing and Development.

This winter, the Road Show will be at the Florida State Fair and several county fairs throughout the state. It will also return to Miami, where several thousand schoolchildren were turned away during the earlier visit. "We are committed," Reese says, "to keeping agriculture's show on the road."





## National Agriculture Day

Continued from page 2

"With less than two percent of Americans living on farms these days," says Elroy Webster, chairman of the Ag Council board of directors, "National Agriculture Day helps remind us of the importance of American agriculture and the men and women who feed and clothe us."

A packet of materials for National Agriculture Day, including some classroom activities, a reading list, a poster, and a planning guide. Call Noah Wood at 1-800-98 AG DAY (1-800-982-4329) for complete order information.

## BOOK CORNER: Building Students' Interest in Geography is as Easy as Pie

"Making an apple pie is really very easy," begins Marjorie Priceman's book *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World*. "First, get all the ingredients at the market. Mix them well, bake, and serve.

"Unless, of course, the market is closed."

This whimsical book takes children on a round-the-world tour as they gather the ingredients for an apple pie. In Italy, they gather semolina wheat. In France, they collect a chicken: "French chickens lay elegant eggs," the book says.

In Sri Lanka, they peel off the bark of the native kurundu tree, which makes the best cinnamon in the world. "If a leopard is napping beneath the tree, be very quiet," the book advises.

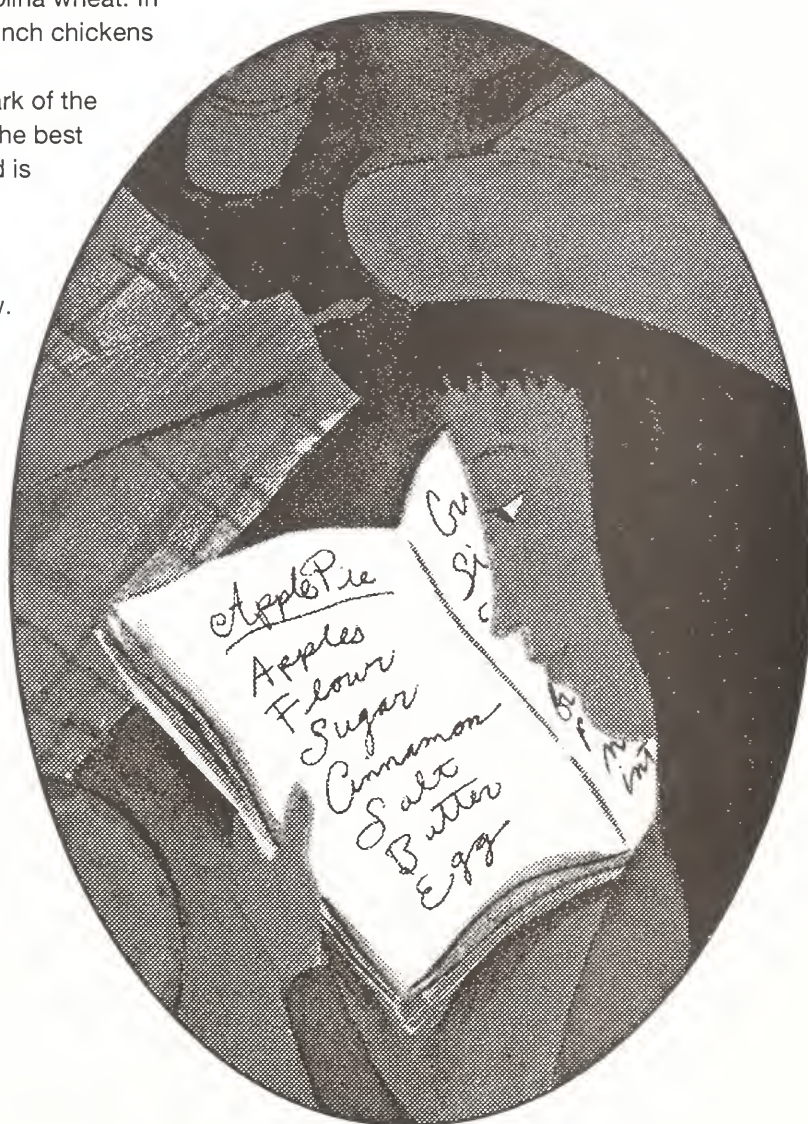
Then it's on to England to make the acquaintance of an English cow. "You'll know she's an English cow from her good manners and charming accent."

Then it's on to Jamaica for sugar and Vermont for apples. Once the ingredients are assembled, the children learn how to prepare the pie (there's a recipe for apple pie in the back of the book). There's also a delightful comic ending, which should appeal to children in the primary grades.

In addition to teaching world geography, the book could also form the basis of a unit on U.S.

agriculture, since each of the ingredients in the apple pie is made or manufactured in the U.S. as well.

Order information: Marjorie Priceman, *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World*, Alfred A. Knopf (New York, 1994).





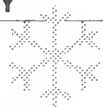
## Agriculture Throughout the Year

From the serious (Hunger Awareness Month) to the silly (Sneak Some Zucchini Onto Your Neighbors' Porch Night), the year offers many opportunities to celebrate the diversity of American agriculture. This list of dates, compiled from Chase's Annual

Events, will help teachers plan interesting, timely activities for each month of the year. Most libraries have the current edition of Chase's in their reference section.

### J A N U A R Y

National Prune Breakfast Month  
National Soup Month  
National Oatmeal Month  
Hot and Spicy Food International Day (1/21)  
National Pie Day (1/23)



### F E B R U A R Y

Canned Food Month  
Celebration of Chocolate  
Great American Pies Month  
National Cherry Month  
The Great American Pizza Bake (2/7 - 2/14)  
National Kraut and Frankfurter Week (2/9-2/18)  
National Pancake Week (2/26 - 3/4)  
International Pancake Day 2/28

*February 18, 1930 - Elm Farm Ollie became the first cow to fly in an airplane. During the flight, which was attended by reporters, she was milked and the milk was sealed in paper containers and parachuted over St. Louis, MO*

### M A R C H

National Frozen Food Month  
National Noodle Month  
National Nutrition Month  
National Peanut Month  
National Pig Day (3/1)  
American Chocolate Week (3/19-25)  
National Agriculture Week (3/20-26)  
National Agriculture Day 3/20



*Pecan Day, March 25, is the anniversary of the day that George Washington planted pecan trees at Mount Vernon in 1775. The trees were a gift from Thomas Jefferson.*

### A P R I L

Keep America Beautiful Month  
National Florida Tomato Month  
National Garden Month  
Egg Salad Week (April 17-23)  
Grange Week (4/23-29)  
National Arbor Day (4/28)

### M A Y

National Barbecue Month  
National Egg Month  
National Hamburger Month  
National Salad Month  
National Strawberry Month  
National Herb Week (5/8-5/14)  
Rural Life Sunday (also Soil Stewardship Sunday)

### J U N E

Dairy Month  
Turkey Lovers' Month  
National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month  
National Rose Month  
National Frozen Yogurt Day (6/4)



### J U L Y

National Baked Bean Month  
National Hot Dog Month  
National Ice Cream Month  
National Ice Cream Day (7/16)

### A U G U S T

National Catfish Month  
Sneak Some Zucchini Onto Your Neighbors' Porch Night (8/8)

### S E P T E M B E R

National Chicken Month  
National Honey Month  
National Organic Harvest Month  
National Papaya Month  
National Rice Month  
National Farm Animals Awareness Week (9/17-23)  
National Farm Safety Week (9/17-23)



### O C T O B E R

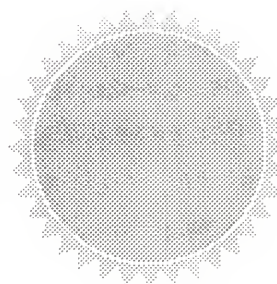
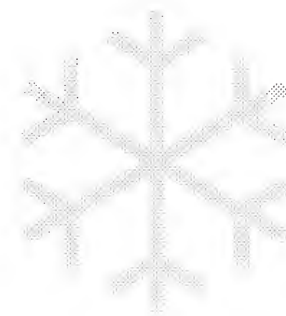
Hunger Awareness Month  
National Pasta Month  
National Pizza Month  
National Popcorn Poppin' Month  
National Pork Month  
National Seafood Month

### N O V E M B E R

National Fig Week  
Peanut Butter Lover's Month

### D E C E M B E R

California Kiwifruit Day (12/22)





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**Ag in the Classroom Notes**

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